

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Full Commission Board Meeting
December 1, 2006
LMEP, 4600 Valley Road, Room 4A
Lincoln, NE
9:00 a.m.**

Chairperson Mr. Daniel Darnall called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

A. Roll Call

Members present were Ms. Mary Ann Burke, Mr. Joseph Caruso, Mr. Daniel Darnall, Ms. Luana Duennerman, Dr. Kenya Taylor and Ms. Barbara Woodhead. Absent were Mr. Mike Carruthers, Mr. James DeVaney and Ms. Pamela Duin. Staff present was Ms. Tanya Wendel, Executive Director, Ms. Rayni Kaika, Mentor Program Coordinator and Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager. Interpreters were Ms. Lorelei Waldron and Ms. Jamy Elker.

B. Acceptance of the Agenda

Ms. Duennerman made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Ms. Barb Woodhead seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, absent; Mr. Caruso, yes; Mr. Darnall, yes; Mr. DeVaney, absent; Ms. Duin, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. DeVaney arrived at 9:10 a.m.

C. Acceptance of the Minutes

1. Full Commission Meeting – December 1, 2006

Ms. Woodhead made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Ms. Burke seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, absent; Mr. Caruso, yes; Mr. DeVaney, yes; Ms. Duin, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Audience Comments

Mr. Darnall introduced Mr. Lindsay Darnall, Jr., representing Interpretek. He explained the services being offered by Interpretek including Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), live interpreter services, interpreter training workshops and serving as a RID testing site.

D. Chairperson's Report

1. Open Round Table Discussion (ORTD) Minutes

Mr. Darnall attended the meeting; the priority is to go to the Legislature to remove the one cent cap for the Nebraska Equipment Distribution Program (NEDP). Mr. Darnall reported the Orchard Manor owner wants to sell the building to the Deaf community; the owner attended the November OAD meeting. The OAD board is contemplating purchasing the building and will discuss it further at the December meeting. Ms. Wendel stated they wanted office space for the Commission's Omaha office. She recently spoke with Mr. Charles Peters who does have another party looking at the building but his preference is for the Deaf community to have the opportunity first.

E. Executive Director's Report

1. Deficit Funding Request

Ms. Wendel reported the deficit funding request is to temporarily increase the personal services limitation connected with the mentoring grant. The cash funds have already been received to fund the position.

2. Licensing Update

a. Memo 11/14/06

b. Minutes 10/6/06

Ms. Wendel reported the licensing documents will be delivered to the Attorney General's office today.

3. Program Update

a. Mentoring Interpreters Across Nebraska (MIAN)

1. Brochure

2. Timeline of Activities

3. MIAN By-Laws

4. Conference Report

Ms. Wendel introduced Ms. Rayni Kaika, Mentor Program Coordinator. Ms. Kaika reported there have been Interpreter Training Program (ITP) graduates but they are not qualified to take QAST or RID and are not skilled enough to be on the referral list. There was a workshop on September 22 – 23, the cohort groups have started along with weekly e-news updates that include world news about interpreting, deaf issues, professional opportunities and interpreting tips. Protégés will have a pre-assessment video evaluated by a group in Texas to see if they are ready to be tested. Ms. Kaika recently went to Scottsbluff and met with 10 people. One person from Scottsbluff and one from North Platte is interested in the program. Going to Scottsbluff on January 10th to meet with agencies that work with deaf and hard of hearing individuals and with Western Nebraska Community College on providing ASL classes. Recently attended a Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) conference in San Diego, CA and learned a lot about running a mentor program and accredited interpreter programs. Ms. Woodhead asked if Metro Community College (MCC) is following the curriculum provided last year. Ms. Kaika stated they have a curriculum but not every course has a syllabus. Ms. Wendel stated there is a new president and a new dean who is working with Ms. Liz Polinski-Smith. Ms. Carol Manning, the full time faculty has taken a leave of absence and there are new instructors. Ms. Wendel is seeing some good things happening with the caliber of instructors but is unsure if they are using the curriculum provided. Ms. Woodhead stated ITP programs need to be three year programs that include a language proficiency test before students move into the interpreter training portion. Ms. Wendel stated MCC is a three year program with one year prep. There have been improvements in the QAST scores for graduates that have taken the test recently.

b. Web Based Interpreter Referral System

Ms. Wendel stated a grant was received from Voc Rehab to fund this project and a contract has been signed with the company that developed WinVantage, the current referral program.

c. Mental Health Advisory Committee Report 8/15/06

1. Letter to Connell

Ms. Peggy Williams reported she has received a response from Mr. Pat Connell regarding treatment options for deaf and hard of hearing youths, the issue is paying for interpreters. Mr. Connell suggested the committee go to the behavioral health coalition or write legislation to make the state responsible for paying for interpreters for youths in behavioral health programs. Ms. Wendel stated there are deaf counselors at Boys Town. Ms. Williams feels that needs to be addressed in another meeting with Mr. Connell.

Ms. Wendel stated Ms. Williams is working with a client with issues related with housing and may be living in an abandoned house. The situation may result in some negative publicity. Ms. Williams is working diligently with family members of the client and has gotten involved with contract negotiations on repairing the property. Refer any questions to Ms. Williams or Ms. Wendel. Ms. Wendel will call a meeting with the Executive Committee if personnel issues evolve from this situation.

Ms. Williams continues to work with Ms. Melinda Brown providing statewide training with Child Protective Service (CPS) workers. Ms. Williams and Ms. Tami Nelson brought in a presenter to the November OAD meeting regarding domestic violence. Ms. Williams would like to provide a workshop for deaf and hard of hearing people and domestic violence program directors in the spring and design a brochure as it relates to the deaf and hard of hearing communities.

d. Statewide Video Portability

Ms. Wendel met with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (formerly DAS Communications) and 10 other agencies on video connectivity and the use of VRI. Vendors were not invited since the state will be required to put it out for bid or quote for the service if they move forward. The language line that the state currently contracts with has indicated they are able to provide sign language interpretation services. Ms. Wendel wants to be able to verify the qualifications of the interpreters they use. HHS and Voc Rehab are very interested in using VRI.

F. Subcommittee Reports

1. Goals Committee

a. Survey/Questionnaire Results

b. Goals/Objectives/Activities

Dr. Taylor commented the questionnaire return rate (27%) was very good. The committee discussed goal two, 2.5 - technology expo; Ms. Duennerman will contact Deaf Nation and try to partner with them. The cost would be nothing and the expo could move ahead. Regarding 2.2, getting to the new senators with information on the Commission, the committee discussed an open house which would be difficult to do, financially and with the busy timeframe. The committee recommended distributing a packet of information including the overview page and a cover letter from Mr. Darnall in early January. This will make the new senators aware of the Commission, what we do, upcoming legislation, etc. Commissioners could do follow up visits with new senators from their districts, possibly the day before the March board meeting. Another idea was to look into getting a meeting room at the Capitol to have a breakfast meeting with the new senators the day of our next board meeting. Discussion. The Board recommendation is for the packet and cover letter to be sent early and explore having a breakfast meeting with new senators the day of our next board meeting. Dr. Taylor is

willing to email all 22 new senators as the Goals Committee Chair to follow up on the packet sent. Each board member could then contact them individually.

2. Interpreter Issues

a. Interpreter Issues Meeting 11/12/06

1. Memo – Legal Settings

b. Interpreter Issues Meeting 10/04/06

c. Interpreter Referral Task Force

d. RID Super site

Ms. Woodhead distributed the results of the task force meeting with the Nebraska Supreme Court. Ms. Burke reported the Committee made a recommendation to decline becoming a RID super site due to the facility costs and duplicating testing sites. Mr. DeVaney asked for a report on F.2.c. Ms. Wendel stated this is a committee that meets on improving interpreter referrals; the number of unfilled assignments remains high. Ms. Wendel will email the most current percentage of unfilled requests.

3. Legislative Committee

a. Equipment Distribution Program

Ms. Wendel met with Ms. Jill Becker, secretary of the Legislature's Transportation Committee and the Director of the Public Service Commission (PSC), Mr. Andy Pollock on changing the NEDP legislation. The legislation has been drafted and a copy distributed. Mr. Pollock will talk with his Commissioners to see if they will support this change. The Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) committee chair has been notified of the change. Senator Dwite Pedersen has been contacted but unsure if he will introduce the bill yet.

4. Deaf/Hard of Hearing Issues

a. Web Based Complaint Process

Ms. Duennerman reported that she and Mr. Norm Weverka attended the Lincoln Association of the Deaf (LAD) meeting and provided a presentation on the Commission's online complaint process. A presentation is planned at a future Omaha Association of the Deaf (OAD) meeting.

H. New Business

Ms. Wendel received a call that the Department of Education will be discussing cutting the budget for programs for deaf and hard of hearing students at their December 6th board meeting. All concerns need to be sent to the NDE Board and Mr. Doug Christensen by December 5th or they can attend the meeting. Ms. Woodhead stated it would be a good idea to have the Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NAD) and the Nebraska School for the Deaf Alumni Association (NSDAA) send letters to address these cuts.

Meeting dates/locations

March 2, 2007 – Lincoln

June 1, 2007 – Omaha

September 7, 2007 – Western Nebraska location to be determined

December 7, 2007 – Lincoln

Meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm